PROCESS FOR DESIGNING A WATERSHED INITIATIVE
LISTENING SESSION #4 -Written Comments
(5/29/02)

Nomination Process

1. Submit nomination package to the State

Governor nominations are too political. I fear that state governments are too political in their process/choices.

States do not seem like the appropriate entity because they might want to limit the number of watersheds they would nominate.

2. Submit the nomination package to EPA

Nomination should go directly to EPA.

But ultimately local watershed associations should have the final say with what happens in their watershed.

Nominations should be community-based only (env/ag/public groups) and go directly to EPA HQ.

Direct nomination to EPA HQ but with state/tribal level coordination and Gov/Tribal Leader endorsement.

Nominations should go to EPA Regional Offices

Regions should include special programs like the Chesapeake Bay Program.

EPA's Regional Offices. This will make it easier to deal with trans-boundary watersheds and avoid state-by-state competition.

Nominations go directly to the Regional Water Directors and should include letters of recommendation from the Governors.

Nominations should be generated locally, by local associations or local governments and should go straight to EPA HQ or Regions. Local governments are the major land use decision-makers and need to have a strong role in the process.

3. Other - Panel(?)

An "inclusive" review committee comprised of non-profits, industry, state, local, fed gov't.

Committee must work through consensus. Nominations should come via local NGOs [committee?] to Regional Admin. for initial screening.

States should play an integral role in the nomination process. However, local watershed groups should be consulted and be permitted to engage in the nomination process. Local groups can provide on-the-ground watershed experience.

Local and statewide watershed groups should have some say in the nomination. (These groups are often at odds with their State water quality agencies)

Whatever mechanism is selected, the regulated community needs to be well represented (*i.e.*, farmers where agricultural N, P, and pesticides are an issue)

Selections should be made by a group of stakeholders.

4. Other - Existing granting program

Watershed projects should be nominated through an already established EPA process/granting mechanism *i.e.*, the WAG process. This will allow for the most efficiency in the selection process.

Limiting the Number of Nominations

No. This could suppress interest for groups that have an excellent chance of success but are not as well known as others.

Could limit certain number per region.

It seems that since this is the first attempt to seek nominations under this initiative, EPA should not stifle the interest among watersheds to compete.

No. The time allotted to submit an application and the parameters of the established criteria will self-limit the number received.

Trans-boundary Nominations

All watershed tend to cross political boundaries at some level. By their nature, watersheds are not defined by jurisdictional/political boundaries.

Assign more weight to projects crossing state lines and EPA boundaries. Preference should be given to multi-boundary areas.

Regional watersheds would be too large for the funding.

Several EPA Regions may have to work together.

The mechanism could be the same, but it would seem necessary that there be some type of formal agreement (*e.g*., MOU) among the administering entities.

Components of Nomination Package

Keep it Short and Simple. Should have a page limit.

Values-human health, recreation, wildlife; innovation vision in place, objectives; partners; transfer model to others; evaluation

Documentation of how project is addressing local concern.

Attitude of the community toward environmental programs.

Demonstration of "holistic" approach (environmental/economic/cultural)

Description of watershed including resource issues
Current efforts/programs/partnerships
Objectives and measurement criteria
Existing funding
Outstanding regulatory issues

Educational strategy
Technical strategy

Contact person. Expected timeline.

Cost estimates. How would the watershed group spend the money.

Description of partnerships and how the partners interact and propose to interact. Proof of strong local stakeholder involvement.

Statement of problem and need; plans for dealing with the problem; list of partners with tasks for each; means of measuring success; examples of how approach can be used nationwide.

Watershed plan and monitoring indicators.

TMDL anticipated or if there already is a TMDL, has the implementation plan been developed.

Measures of progress and definition of what constitutes project success.

Project objective
Innovation - Value-added component
Sound business plan, including timeline. Demonstration of competence. Cost-benefit assessment.
Leveraging state/foundation resources
Transferability
Endorsements or letters of support from key stakeholders
Description of progress (demonstrated or potential)

Description of need
Description of watershed size and population, water uses

Name of Watershed
Objective
Justification
Contact information
Cost of study

Past history
Partners
Plan of work
Measurable results
Education/outreach

Selection Criteria

Yes, the listed criteria are appropriate.

Value of the resource might be a good criteria, but how do you define value?

Focus on Success is a bad idea [no explanation why]

Instead of Focus on Success, it should be Focus on Competency. Demonstrated competency.

Instead of Focus on Success, should be Focus on Plan. Some watersheds have a good plan, all partners, and are ready to go. They are only limited by finding needs or gaps in existing funding sources.

<u>Other criteria</u>

Severity of one environmental problem or address multiple problems (watershed approach favors the

later)

How the project will reduce the percentage of impervious surfaces. How the project will improve the development pattern of the area.

Threat of sprawl, population, growth potential
Source of drinking water
Biodiversity. High levels of aquatic biodiversity. Preservation, preventative projects to protect biodiveristy.

Is there a watershed planing and regulatory scheme in place. Track record of success or good program

Water quantity issues sine they relate to water quality, *e.g*., basin-wide conservation plans

Potential for transferable results that will help overcome identified barriers to water quality success and progress. Plans that look at overcoming barriers to success.

Use of integrative approach to include cultural heritage and economic factors which tie into environmental decisions.

Leveraging. Funding by the applicant. Scope of project and realistic use of funds.

Sustainability

Utilization of other federal programs, such as USDA conservation programs and state programs.

Education and outreach

Change in attitude and awareness

Should any criteria have more weight than others?

Joint applications should be weighted more.

Yes, threat of sprawl and extent of non-point source pollution

Yes, the recognized biodiversity of the area should be the major selection criteria..

Yes, 1) High levels of biodiversity and 2) Focus on competency.

Yes, Potential for transferable results that will help overcome identified barriers to water quality success

and progress is the most important; plus innovation, broad support, and demonstrated competency. EPA should use the Initiative as a tool–key ought to be value added re: overcoming barriers.

Yes, as predetermined by EPA to meet their specified goal. Weight is entirely dependent on EPA policy objectives.

Weight should be given to locally driven projects. Additional weight could be give to projects that "add economic value" (improves water and creates jobs)

Level of support and Innovation should be weighted more.

Transferability. Focus on pilot projects

Educational element

Ecological value should be weighted more than economic value. Environmental restoration projects should be the primary focus, then support of project and innovation.

Partnerships developed; innovation; multiple stresses faced, and are they where that can get to an answer should be primary criteria.

Who is involved and how is key to whether the institutional structure will be in place to make the project work.

Should there be a watershed size limitation?

No, as long as the project is workable. Groups in both small and large watersheds can achieve successes that can serve as models. There will be very good projects at various scales.

Eligibility should not be based on size.

Focus o the use of the funds–realistic at the proposed scale?

Size should not be a limiting factor. But may be equally important to recognize the importance of microwatersheds in the solution process.

In order to attain demonstratable results limit to between 14-8 digit HUC.

Large watersheds will not be able to demonstrate much success with the small amount of money available.

Smaller project may have more impact.

If there is only going to be about $1 million per watershed project, there has to be a maximum size–the smaller the watershed, the more effective the $.

Projects should be manageable.

EPA may want to suggest a range of scales.